

Name:  
Holocaust Literature Unit

Date:  
Mrs. Seemayer



### Unit Objectives

Know

- Students will know events of the Holocaust.
- Students will know vocabulary pertaining to the Holocaust.

Understand

- Students will understand portions of Jewish history and persecution.
- Students will understand the impact of the Holocaust on the world and the individual.
- Students will understand how the Holocaust was able to happen.

Do

- Students will be able to discuss and reason through difficult topics.
- Students will be able to write a CEPEP.
- Students will be able to read and annotate complex text.
- Students will be able to draw inferences from pictures.
- Students will be able to write a Critical Lens.

# Independent Reading Calendar

March

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
|        | 2      | 3       | 4         | 5        | 6      | 7        |
| 8      | 9      | 10      | 11        | 12       | 13     | 14       |
| 15     | 16     | 17      | 18        | 19       | 20     | 21       |
| 22     | 23     | 24      | 25        | 26       | 27     | 28       |

## The Guidelines for Independent Reading:

1. You must make progress throughout the entire time you have to read your book.
2. You must have at least one set of questions to turn in every \_\_\_\_\_.
3. You must finish your book by or before \_\_\_\_\_.
4. It is beneficial for you to stay on the same track as the others in your reading group.
5. If you would like, you can read more than one book, but you must stay on track with your group book.

## **Promises to Abram**

New King James Version (NKJV)

### **Genesis 12**

**1**

Now the Lord had said to Abram:  
"Get out of your country,  
From your family  
And from your father's house,  
To a land that I will show you.

**2**

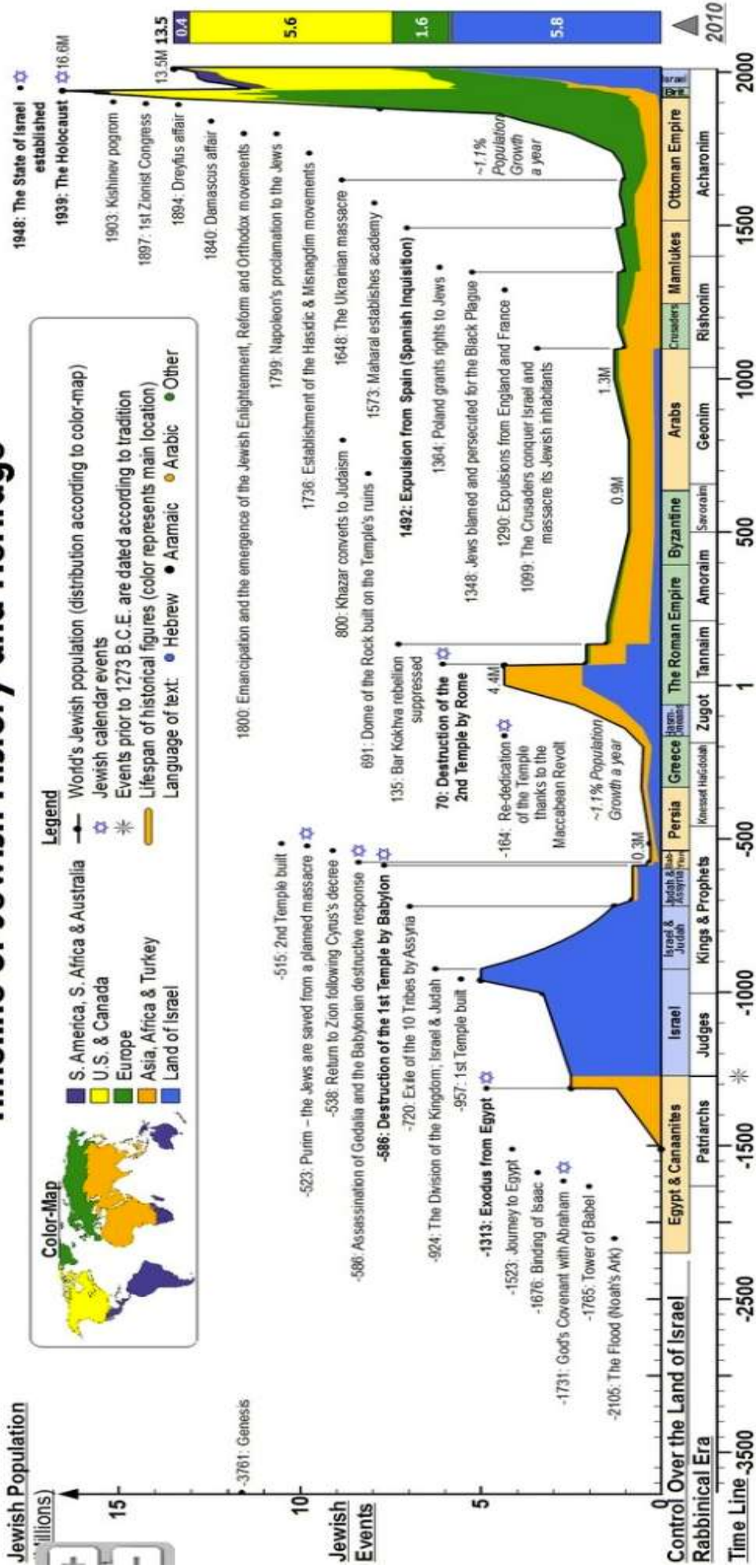
I will make you a great nation;  
I will bless you  
And make your name great;  
And you shall be a blessing.

**3**

I will bless those who bless you,  
And I will curse him who curses you;  
And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

### **Brain Spill**

# Timeline of Jewish History and Heritage



## Observations

# Holocaust Vocabulary

**Allies-** The nations fighting Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy during World War II, primarily Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States.

**Anti-Semitism-** Dislike or hatred of Jews

**Aryan-** Term used by the Nazis to describe northern European physical characteristics (such as blonde hair and blue eyes) as racially "superior".

**Axis-** The Axis powers, originally Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, extended to Japan when it entered the war.

**Concentration Camp-** Camps in which Jews were imprisoned by the Nazis, located in Germany and Nazi-occupied Europe. There were three different kinds of camps: transit, labor and extermination. Many prisoners in concentration camps died within months of arriving from violence or starvation.

**Extermination Camp-** Six major camps designed and built for the sole purpose of killing Jews. These were Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec, Chelmno, Majdanek, Sobibor and Treblinka.

**Final Solution-** Term used by the Nazis to describe their plan to annihilate the entire Jewish population of Europe.

**Furher-** German word for "leader," it was adopted by Adolf Hitler as his title after Hindenburg's death.

**Genocide-** Deliberate, systematic murder of an entire political, cultural, racial, or religious group.

**Gestapo-** The secret state police of the German army, organized to stamp out any political opposition.

**Ghetto-** A section of a city where Jews were forced to live, usually with several families living in one house, separated from the rest of the city by walls or wire fences, and used primarily as a station for gathering Jews for deportation to concentration camps.

**Holocaust-** Term first used in the late 1950s to describe the systematic torture and murder of approximately six million European Jews and millions of other "undesirables" by the Nazi regime from 1933 to 1945.

**Jews-** Persons identifying themselves with the Jewish community or as followers of the Jewish religion or culture.

**Kristallnacht-** Also referred to as the "Night of Broken Glass," this pogrom occurred on Nov. 9-10, 1938 in Germany and Austria against hundreds of synagogues, Jewish-owned businesses, homes and Jews themselves. This so-called "spontaneous demonstration" was in reaction to the assassination of a German official by a Jewish student whose parents had been deported to the Polish border.

**Nazi-** Name for members of the NSDAP, National Socialist Democratic Workers Party, who believed in the idea of Aryan supremacy. (Hitler's followers)

**Nuremberg Laws-** Anti-Jewish laws enacted in 1935; included denial of German citizenship to those of Jewish heritage and segregation of them from German society; also established "degrees of Jewishness" based on family lines.

**Propaganda-** Media used to persuade or convince a large group of people

**Swastika-** A symbol of peace for millions of Hindus, Buddhists and also Raelians since it is their symbol of infinity in time, their symbol of eternity. This symbol was later used by the Nazi party, which created a negative connotation for the symbol.

**Third Reich-** The Third Empire; name given to the Nazi regime in Germany; Hitler boasted that the Third Reich would reign for 1,000 years.

**Yellow star-** The six-pointed Star of David was a Jewish symbol that the Nazis forced Jews above the age of six to wear as a mark of shame and to make Jews visible. In some areas the star carried a word meaning "Jew," in the middle.

# The Path to Nazi Genocide

## Video

1. World War I was referred to as “The War to \_\_\_\_\_.”
2. Who lost WWI?

### Aftermath of World War I and the Rise of Nazism

3. How did the Treaty of Versailles affect Germany?
4. What did Hitler want for Germany as expressed in his book, *Mein Kampf*?
5. How did the Nazi Party attract supporters?
6. What was Hitler’s first step in gaining control over the German people?

### Building a National Community

7. How did Hitler become leader of Germany?
8. How did the Nazis help Germany’s economy recover?
9. What new laws were put into place at Nuremberg?
10. What was the Nazi goal?

11. Which groups were considered inferior?

### **From Citizens to Outcasts**

12. What actions did the Nazis take to isolate the Jews?

13. What was the goal of Nazi propaganda?

14. What happened on November 9, 1938?

15. What laws were made that affected Jews after Kristallnacht? How did Jews respond?

### **World War II**

16. What happened on and after September 1, 1939?

17. What was the “final solution to the Jewish question”?

18. What was the Warsaw Ghetto? What was life like there?

19. What was in Auschwitz? What happened there?

20. What happened to people who were unable to work?



# Anti-Semitism

## Reading your article on Anti-Semitism:

Access the article

- Go to [DestinyEnglish.weebly.com](http://DestinyEnglish.weebly.com)
- Hover over “10<sup>th</sup> Grade English”
- Click on “Holocaust Literature”
- Click on the button that has your book’s title
- Scroll down to the “Resources” section
- Click on “Anti-Semetism”

Take notes on your article

- Use the space below to take notes on the article you read
- Include important **events**, **dates**, and **people**
- Be prepared to share!

### Anti-Semitism Article Notes:

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# Genocide Phases

The phrase “The Holocaust” is often defined as the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. It is a specific event and period in time beginning in 1933 with the rise of Adolph Hitler to power in Germany and ending in 1945 with the loss of Germany and the collapse of the Nazi Regime. It is an example of genocide that is unique in history.

The term genocide is a general term that is defined as the deliberate and systematic destruction, in whole or in part, of an ethnic, racial, religious, or national group. There are 8 recognizable stages that are as follows:

**1. CLASSIFICATION:** All cultures have categories to distinguish people into “us and them” by ethnicity, race, religion, or nationality: German and Jew, Hutu and Tutsi are some examples.

**2. SYMBOLIZATION:** We give names or other symbols to the classifications. We name people “Jews” or “Gypsies”, or distinguish them by colors or dress; and apply the symbols to members of groups. Classification and symbolization are universally human and do not necessarily result in genocide unless they lead to the next stage, dehumanization.

**3. DEHUMANIZATION:** One group denies the humanity of the other group. Members of it are equated with animals, vermin, insects or diseases. Dehumanization overcomes the normal human revulsion against murder. At this stage, hate propaganda in print and on hate radios is used to vilify the victim group.

**4. ORGANIZATION:** Genocide is always organized, usually by the state, often using militias to provide deniability of state responsibility (the Janjaweed in Darfur). Special army units or militias are often trained and armed. Plans are made for genocidal killings

**5. POLARIZATION:** Extremists drive the groups apart. Hate groups broadcast polarizing propaganda. Laws may forbid intermarriage or social interaction. Extremist terrorism targets moderates, intimidating and silencing the center. Moderates from the perpetrators’ own group are most able to stop genocide, so are the first to be arrested and killed.

**6. PREPARATION:** Victims are identified and separated out because of their ethnic or religious identity. Death lists are drawn up. Members of victim groups are forced to wear identifying symbols. Their property is expropriated. They are often segregated into ghettos, deported into concentration camps, or confined to a famine-struck region and starved.

**7. EXTERMINATION** begins, and quickly becomes the mass killing legally called “genocide.” It is “extermination” to the killers because they do not believe their victims to be fully human.

**8. DENIAL** is the eighth stage that always follows a genocide. It is among the surest indicators of further genocidal massacres. The perpetrators of genocide dig up the mass graves, burn the bodies, try to cover up the evidence and intimidate the witnesses. They deny that they committed any crimes, and often blame what happened on the victims. They block investigations of the crimes, and continue to govern until driven from power by force, when they flee into exile (2).

# “Final Solution”: Overview

The Nazis frequently used euphemistic language to disguise the true nature of their crimes. They used the term “Final Solution” to refer to their plan to annihilate the Jewish people. It is not known when the leaders of Nazi Germany definitively decided to implement the "Final Solution." The genocide, or mass destruction, of the Jews was the culmination of a decade of increasingly severe discriminatory measures.

Under the rule of Adolf Hitler, the persecution and segregation of Jews was implemented in stages. After the Nazi party achieved power in Germany in 1933, its state-sponsored racism led to anti-Jewish legislation, economic boycotts, and the violence of the *Kristallnacht* ("Night of Broken Glass") pogroms, all of which aimed to systematically isolate Jews from society and drive them out of the country.

## ANTI-JEWISH POLICY ESCALATES

After the September 1939 German invasion of Poland (the beginning of World War II), anti-Jewish policy escalated to the imprisonment and eventual murder of European Jewry. The Nazis first established ghettos (enclosed areas designed to isolate and control the Jews) in the Generalgouvernement (a territory in central



and eastern Poland overseen by a German civilian government) and the Warthegau (an area of western Poland annexed to Germany). Polish and western European Jews were deported to these ghettos where they lived in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions with inadequate food.

## MASSIVE KILLING OPERATIONS BEGIN

After the June 1941 German invasion of the Soviet Union, SS and police units (acting as mobile killing units) began massive killing operations aimed at entire Jewish communities. By autumn 1941, the SS and police introduced mobile gas vans. These paneled trucks had exhaust pipes reconfigured to pump poisonous carbon monoxide gas into sealed spaces, killing those locked within. They were designed to complement ongoing shooting operations.

On July 17, 1941, four weeks after the invasion of the Soviet Union, Hitler tasked SS chief Heinrich Himmler with responsibility for all security matters in the

occupied Soviet Union. Hitler gave Himmler broad authority to physically eliminate any perceived threats to permanent German rule. Two weeks later, on July 31, 1941, Nazi leader Hermann Goering authorized SS General Reinhard Heydrich to make preparations for the implementation of a "complete solution of the Jewish question."

## **KILLING CENTERS**

In the autumn of 1941, SS chief Heinrich Himmler assigned German General Odilo Globocnik (SS and police leader for the Lublin District) with the implementation of a plan to systematically murder the Jews of the Generalgouvernement. The code name Operation Reinhard was eventually given



Human remains found in the Dachau concentration camp crematorium after liberation. Germany, April 1945.

— *US Holocaust Memorial Museum*

police killed at least 152,000 people, mostly Jews, but also a few thousand Roma (Gypsies), in gas vans at the Chelmno killing center about thirty miles northwest of Lodz. In the spring of 1942, Himmler designated Auschwitz II (Auschwitz-Birkenau) as a killing facility. SS authorities murdered approximately one million Jews from various European countries at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

German SS and police murdered nearly 2,700,000 Jews in the killing centers either by asphyxiation with poison gas or by shooting. In its entirety, the "Final Solution" called for the murder of all European Jews by gassing, shooting, and other means. Approximately six million Jewish men, women, and children were killed during the Holocaust -- two-thirds of the Jews living in Europe before World War II.

to this plan, named after Heydrich (who was assassinated by Czech partisans in May 1942). As part of Operation Reinhard, Nazi leaders established three killing centers in Poland -- Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka -- with the sole purpose of the mass murder of Jews.

The Majdanek camp served from time to time as a killing site for Jews residing in the Generalgouvernement. In its gas chambers, the SS killed tens of thousands of Jews, primarily forced laborers too weak to work. The SS and

# Propaganda Analysis

1. What are the main colors used in the poster?
  
2. What symbols (if any) are used in the poster?
  - a. If a symbol is used, is it
    1. clear (easy to interpret)?
    2. memorable?
    3. dramatic?
  
3. Are the messages in the poster primarily pictorial, linguistic, or both?
  
4. Who do you think is the intended audience for the poster?
  
5. What does the Nazi Government hope the audience will do?
  
  
6. What Nazi purpose(s) is served by the tabloid?
  
  
7. The most effective posters use symbols that are unusual, simple, and direct. This causes the onlooker to need to think about the poster and its intended message. What message is it sending/implying towards its audience?

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# Nazis Launch Kristallnacht

On November 9, 1938, in an event that would foreshadow the Holocaust, German Nazis launch a campaign of terror against Jewish people and their homes and businesses in Germany and Austria. The violence, which continued through November 10 and was later dubbed "Kristallnacht," or "Night of Broken Glass," after the countless smashed windows of Jewish-owned establishments, left approximately 100 Jews dead, 7,500 Jewish businesses damaged and hundreds of synagogues, homes, schools and graveyards vandalized. An estimated 30,000 Jewish men were arrested, many of whom were then sent to concentration camps for several months; they were released when they promised to leave Germany. Kristallnacht represented a dramatic escalation of the campaign started by Adolf Hitler in 1933 when he became chancellor to purge Germany of its Jewish population.



The Nazis used the murder of a low-level German diplomat in Paris by a 17-year-old Polish Jew as an excuse to carry out the Kristallnacht attacks. On November 7, 1938, Ernst vom Rath was shot outside the German embassy by Herschel Grynszpan, who wanted revenge for his parents' sudden deportation from Germany to Poland, along with tens of thousands of other Polish Jews. Following vom Rath's death, Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels ordered German storm troopers to carry out violent riots disguised as "spontaneous demonstrations" against Jewish citizens. Local police and fire departments were told not to interfere. In the face of all the devastation, some Jews, including entire families, committed suicide.

In the aftermath of Kristallnacht, the Nazis blamed the Jews and fined them 1 billion marks (or \$400 million in 1938 dollars) for vom Rath's death. As repayment, the government seized Jewish property and kept insurance money owed to Jewish people. In its quest to create a master Aryan race, the Nazi government enacted further discriminatory policies that essentially excluded Jews from all aspects of public life.



Germans pass by the broken shop window of a Jewish-owned business that was destroyed during Kristallnacht, Berlin, Germany, November 1938

Over 100,000 Jews fled Germany for other countries after Kristallnacht. The international community was outraged by the violent events of November 9 and 10. Some countries broke off diplomatic relations in protest, but the Nazis suffered no serious consequences, leading them to believe they could get away with the mass murder that was the Holocaust, in which an estimated 6 million European Jews died.

# **Kristallnacht Testimonies**

*What can we learn from the events of Kristallnacht?*

## **Mr. Werner Coppel**

You must first remember the context of my experience. In 1938, I was 13 years old and had experienced Nazi Germany for the last five years. I was 8 years old in 1933 when the Nazi party took over the German government. Even with this beginning event, my whole lifestyle as a Jewish child changed drastically.

I lived in a small town with a very small Jewish community. There were about 220 Jews in my community, and only about 22 Jewish children. Our whole life centered on a small room in our town's synagogue, which was our safe haven from the outside world and from Nazi Germany. At this point in time, Jews were not allowed on playgrounds or in parks. We were not allowed entrance to movies or restaurants. There were signs that stated, "Jews and dogs prohibited" or "Jews die in the gutter."

All the children gathered in the synagogue every day. The cub scouts and girl scouts were put together, based on what training they had. There were Zionist overtones to our community; the ultimate goal was to return to Israel. When we were in the synagogue, we were not bothered with what was going on in the outside world. It was in that very room in the synagogue that I was able to celebrate my Bar Mitzvah in February of 1938. It was a very simple celebration with soft drinks and cake, but it was held in a safe environment.

It happened on November 9th. I had heard 2 or 3 days earlier that von Rath had been shot and killed by a Jewish boy in Paris. I had no idea what would happen later.

All the synagogues in Germany were destroyed. In our town, the synagogue was not burned, because if it was burned it would have burned down the entire block, and the Nazis did not want this. However, no one stopped them from destroying the entire inside of the synagogue. This changed my entire life, as this had been our safe haven. In 1936, every Jewish ID card had to be stamped with the letter "J" for "Jude," meaning "Jew." Now with Kristallnacht, every Jewish male had to add the name "Israel" and every Jewish female had to add the name "Sarah." So, I became Werner Israel Coppel. My entire social life stopped, and life changed direction completely. I was eventually sent to Auschwitz in 1945.

Now as I look back 70 years later, the lesson for all of us is that what happened in Germany was a consequence of racism, hate, and prejudice. Every new generation must be aware that the cancer of hate and prejudice is also with us today. There is no way anyone can walk away from messages that contain racism, prejudice, name-calling, etc. You must always stand up against racism and prejudice, even if you are not being directly persecuted.



## Mr. Hugo Eichelberg

I was living in Hamburg at the time. I was a student at an advanced preparatory school next to our synagogue. I remember we could look out the windows of the school and see the synagogue. The morning after Kristallnacht, I remember we looked out the windows and we could see just strands of glass where the windows of the synagogue had been destroyed. The entire inside of the synagogue had been burnt out. Our teacher got there in the morning and then let us out early due to what had happened. He went home to offer his prayers.

During that time there were the brown shirts and the black shirts. The black shirts were the SS and the brown shirts were the SA. They had a quota for the number of men they had to arrest. They sat in front of the home of our rabbi, but for some reason he was not arrested. My father was also not arrested, despite the fact that we lived just across the courtyard from an SS soldier. Many others were imprisoned and interned in the camps. My family decided it was best if my father left Germany. In June, 1939, all his papers were in order, and he left for England in September of 1939.

The war broke out very soon after that as Germany invaded Poland, and England and France got involved. My father went to Scotland Yard and informed the English that he had family in Germany. Before we could leave to join him, however, my mother was called to meet with the Gestapo, where they asked her about my father. The Gestapo had intercepted a letter from my mother to my father, and on the 7th day of the Passover, the Gestapo gave me and my mother 24 hours to leave Germany, or we would be arrested.

We left Hamburg on the last day of Passover and took a train to Italy. In Italy there were two boats: the Manhattan and the Roma. The Roma was an Italian boat, but its passengers never got to depart because Mussolini did not allow the ship to sail. I do not know what happened to the passengers of that boat. My mother and I were on the Manhattan, which left as scheduled and sailed to New York. My father left England three days later and we eventually met up in New York, where we stayed for eleven weeks. After those eleven weeks, we moved to Cincinnati, where we had relatives.

There are some important things to keep in mind. Our rabbi, who played a great role in my growth and development, refused to leave Germany, but he knew exactly what was going on. Much like a captain refusing to abandon ship, he stayed in Germany with the Jews. Also, Hamburg was not at this time antisemitic. The Nazis had to import people from southern Germany to do their dirty work in destroying Hamburg's synagogues. The people in Hamburg would not destroy anything; they would not lay a finger on the Jewish buildings. Also, there were other synagogues in Hamburg that were not Jewish, and these were not destroyed. After Kristallnacht, we moved to a Spanish-Portuguese synagogue. It was not completely orthodox but we were able to make changes to make it work for us. We were the only place in Germany that was still able to worship in a synagogue after Kristallnacht took place.

As I look back now 70 years, it is important to realize that this can happen in any country. It is not an isolated event in Germany. We must make our own destiny.

# Mrs. Sonja Stratman

[Mrs. Stratman is not Jewish, but was a youth in Germany during the events of Kristallnacht.]

Well, I am not Jewish, so I do not remember the events and did not experience the events like others did. I lived in Nuremberg. I was 10 years old at the time. I heard some noise that night, but my parents tried very hard to keep me away from everything. The event was not explained properly to me as a child. I can't remember much at all from the event, but I must have seen some of the broken windows. My parents did not want to talk about it, and I was kept away from it.

I wonder whether anyone living in America can understand the fact that in Germany you could not speak as to what your feelings were because you were afraid of what might happen to all of us under the Nazi Regime. Here in the U.S. I feel so free that I can talk to you about how I feel. I will never keep my mouth shut if something is not right. I hope our youth learns that too.

From: <http://www.holocaustandhumanity.org/kristallnacht/cincinnati-eyewitness-testimonies/>

What should be taken away from this testimony of a Holocaust survivor?

What parts of the testimony impacted your thinking? Why?

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## The Ghetto

The poem is preserved in typewritten copy on thin paper in the collection of poetry by Pavel Friedmann, which was donated to the National Jewish Museum during its documentation campaign. It is dated June 4, 1942 in the left corner. Pavel Friedmann was born January 7, 1921, in Prague and deported to Terezín\* on April 26, 1942. He died in Oswiecim\* (Auschwitz) on September 29, 1944.

\*Terezín was a Nazi concentration camp.

## The Butterfly

The last, the very last,  
So richly, brightly, dazzlingly yellow.  
Perhaps if the sun's tears would sing  
against a white stone...






Such, such a yellow  
Is carried lightly 'way up high.  
It went away I'm sure because it wished to  
kiss the world goodbye.

For seven weeks I've lived in here,  
Penned up inside this ghetto  
But I have found my people here.  
The dandelions call to me  
And the white chestnut candles in the court.  
Only I never saw another butterfly.

That butterfly was the last one.  
Butterflies don't live in here,  
In the ghetto.

*Pavel Friedmann 4. 6. 1942*

# Ghetto Picture Analysis

| What I See  | What I Observe | What I Infer |
|---|----------------|--------------|
|    |                |              |
|    |                |              |
|  |                |              |
|  |                |              |
|  |                |              |

## Deportation

The poem is preserved in a copy turned over to the State Jewish Museum in Prague by Dr. R. Feder in 1955. It is signed at the bottom, "12 year old Eva Picková from Nymburk". Eva Picková was born in Nymburk on May 15, 1929, deported to Terezín\* on April 16, 1942, and perished in Oswiecim (Auschwitz) on December 18, 1943.

\*Terezín was a Nazi concentration camp.

### Fear

Today the ghetto knows a different fear,  
Close in its grip, Death wields an icy scythe.  
An evil sickness spreads a terror in its wake,  
The victims of its shadow weep and writhe.

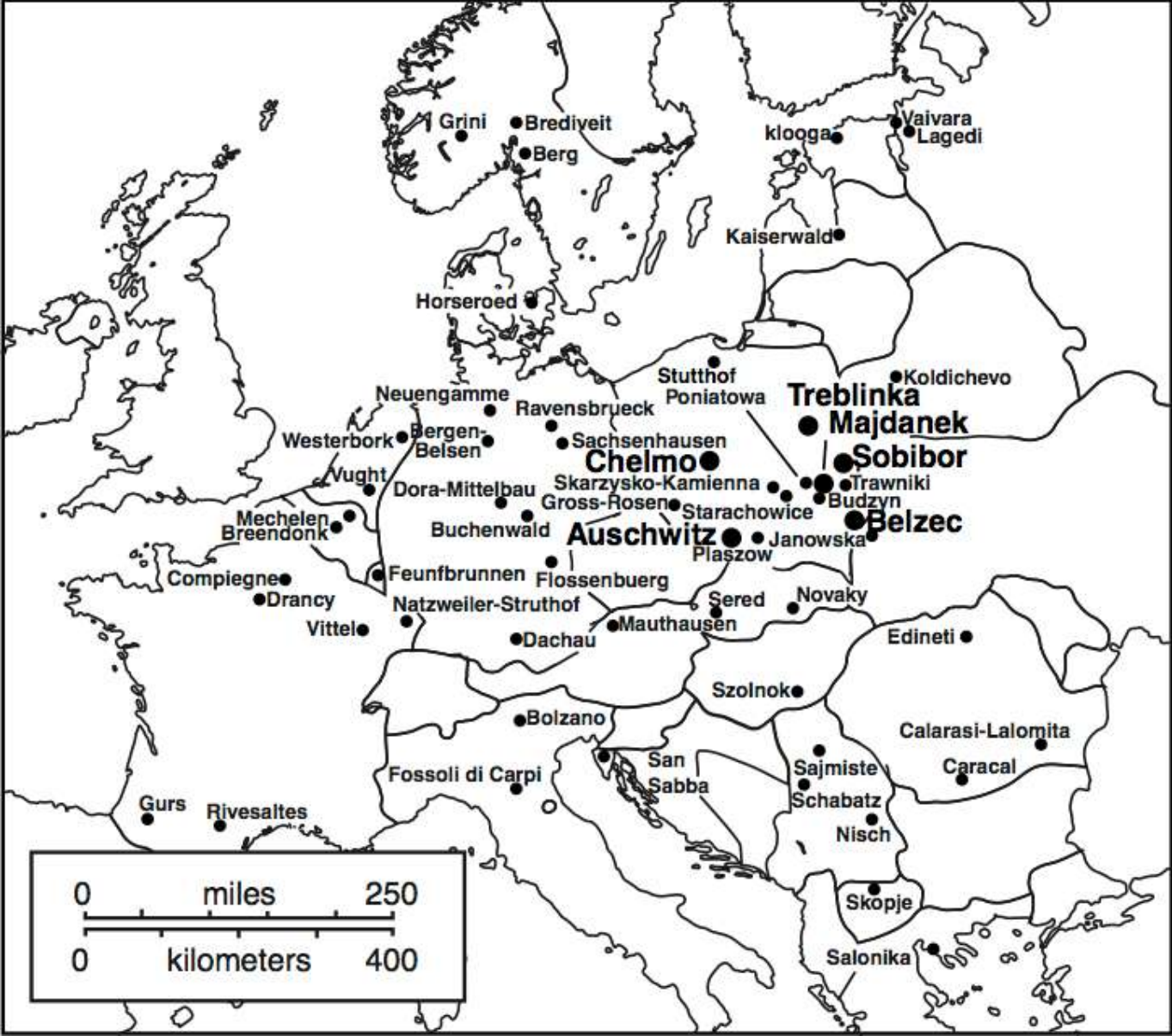
Today a father's heartbeat tells his fright  
And mothers bend their heads into their hands.  
Now children choke and die with typhus here,  
A bitter tax is taken from their bands.

My heart still beats inside my breast  
While friends depart for other worlds.  
Perhaps it's better – who can say? –  
Than watching this, to die today?






No, no, my God, we want to live!  
Not watch our numbers melt away.  
We want to have a better world,  
We want to work – we must not die!

*Eva Picková, 12 years old, Nymburk*

# Concentration Camps



# Concentration Camp Picture Analysis

| <b>What I See</b>   | <b>What I Observe</b> | <b>What I Infer</b> |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------|
|    |                       |                     |
|    |                       |                     |
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# MARTIN NIEMÖLLER: BIOGRAPHY

Martin Niemöller (1892–1984) was a prominent Protestant pastor who emerged as an outspoken public foe of Adolf Hitler and spent the last seven years of Nazi rule in concentration camps, despite his ardent nationalism. Niemöller is perhaps best remembered for the quotation: “[First they came for the Socialists](#), and I did not speak out...”

The son of Lutheran pastor Heinrich Niemöller, Martin Niemöller was born in the Westphalian town of Lippstadt, Germany, on January 14, 1892. In 1910 he became a cadet in the Imperial German Navy. With the outbreak of World War I in 1914, Niemöller was assigned to a U-Boat, of which he was eventually appointed the commander. Under the stipulations of the armistice of November 11, 1918, that ended hostilities in World War I, Niemöller and other commanders were ordered to turn over their U-Boats to England. Along with many others, Niemöller refused to obey this order, and was, as a consequence, discharged from the Navy.

In 1920, he decided to follow the path of his father and began seminary training at the University of Münster. He married Else Bruner on April 20, 1919. The couple had 6 children.

Niemöller's pro-monarchist convictions and nationalism made him critical of the Weimar Republic, which he perceived to be weak and vulnerable to a Communist uprising. Because he believed that the Republic, led by those who signed the [Treaty of Versailles](#), had crippled Germany, he supported the unsuccessful Kapp-Lüttwitz Putsch that aimed to overthrow the government in 1920. At this time Niemöller had been a member of an organization of right-wing students called the Academic Defense Corps (*Freikorps*), which was disbanded and disarmed on April 23, 1920, after the failure of the Kapp putsch.

As inflation and economic and political turmoil increased in Germany during 1922, Niemöller took a part-time job laying tracks for the railroads while continuing his seminary studies. In 1923, Niemöller began working with the Lutheran Home Mission of Westphalia, an organization which oversaw the social welfare activities of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Westphalia. In 1931, he resigned from this position and became the junior pastor of Saint Anne's Church, located in a wealthy and much sought-after parish in the Berlin suburb of Dahlem.

Niemöller's sermons reflected his strong nationalist sentiment. He felt that reparations, democracy, and foreign influence had led to damaging social fragmentation and an overemphasis on the individual in German society. Niemöller believed that Germany needed a strong leader to promote national unity and honor. When Hitler and the National Socialist Party emerged, touting nationalist slogans and advocating autonomy for private worship of the Christian faith, Niemöller voted for the Nazis—both in the 1924 Prussian state elections and in the final national parliamentary elections of March 1933.

Hitler espoused the importance of Christianity to German nationality and Christianity's role in a renewal of national morality and ethics, leading Niemöller to enthusiastically welcome the



Third Reich. Niemöller later confessed that even Hitler's antisemitism reflected a more extreme version of his own prejudice at that time.

Niemöller's conflicts with National Socialism emerged out of his opposition to the German Christians, a pro-Nazi faction within the German Protestant Church that sought to apply Nazi racial dogma to church membership in such a way as to bar so-called non-Aryans (people considered Jewish under Nazi racial laws) from the ministry and from religious teaching positions.

The ideology of the German Christians was expressed in the speech of one of their leaders, Dr. Reinhold Krause, at the 1933 Sports Palace Rally. Depicting Martin Luther as a militant symbol for the preservation of German race and culture, the German Christians embraced Nazi racial ideology and demanded that all Jewish elements, including the Old Testament, be excluded from Christian theology. This rally was seen as blasphemous and led to a radical drop in support for the German Christians. But attacks on “non-Aryan” church members had already led Niemöller and others to establish the Pastors Emergency League (PEL) in September 1933. The PEL opposed the introduction of racialized criteria for clergy and combated the German Christian agenda.

The PEL was the forerunner of the Confessing Church, a Protestant church faction that was founded in May 1934 to oppose German Christian leadership. Niemöller became a leading figure in the Confessing Church. He made the following arguments against the German Christians:

- 1) the politicizing of church leadership positions was an unwarranted interference of the state in the apparatus of the church and served to suppress minority opinions within the Lutheran Church;
- 2) bestowing a divine essence upon German history and culture encouraged atheist nationalism and discouraged Christian faith; and
- 3) by expelling converted Jews from the church, the German Christians were elevating the so-called science of race above the divine ceremony of baptism.

Yet the PEL had repeatedly stressed that criticism of the Nazi state was confined to internal church matters. Niemöller's doctrinal opposition to the German Christians did not initially alter his political support for Hitler and the Nazis. When Hitler defiantly led Germany out of the League of Nations in October 1933, Niemöller (representing the PEL) sent him a telegram of congratulations, emphasizing the patriotism of PEL members. Moreover, antisemitism was widespread within the PEL and subsequently in the Confessing Church. Niemöller remained an outspoken antisemite throughout the 1930s, justifying his prejudices by referring to Christian teachings that the Jews were guilty of deicide, the killing of Jesus.

In a 1935 sermon, Niemöller described the Jews as “a highly gifted people which produces idea

after idea for the benefit of the world, but whatever it takes up changes into poison, and all that it ever reaps is contempt and hatred.” Niemöller's opposition to racial laws was only on behalf of people who had converted to Christianity, and even here he initially favored the establishment of a separate church for them.

A turning point in Niemöller's political sympathies was a January 1934 meeting of Adolf Hitler, Niemöller, and two prominent Protestant bishops to discuss state pressures on churches. At the meeting it became clear that Niemöller's phone had been tapped by the Gestapo (German Secret State Police) and that the PEL was under close state surveillance. Following the meeting, the two bishops signed a statement of unconditional loyalty to the *Führer*. In contrast, Niemöller had come to see the Nazi state as a dictatorship, one which he would oppose.

These doctrinal disputes induced Niemöller and others to found the Confessing Church in May 1934. The Confessing Church declared itself to be the one true Lutheran Church in Germany, deriving inspiration directly from God. A charismatic preacher, Niemöller soon became widely known throughout Berlin for his critical sermons. Despite warnings from the police, he continued to preach against the state's attempts to interfere with church governance and what he viewed as the neo-paganism encouraged by the Nazis. As a consequence, Niemöller was repeatedly arrested between 1934 and 1937.

In July 1937, Gestapo officials arrested Niemöller again, charged him with “treasonable statements” and incarcerated him in the Moabit Prison in Berlin for seven and a half months, until his trial, in solitary confinement. In February 1938, he was convicted under the Law for the Prevention of Treacherous Attacks on State and Party and the Law for the Maintenance of Respect for Party Uniforms and sentenced to seven months detention and a fine of 2,000 *Reichsmark*. Although his prison sentence had been served awaiting trial, the Gestapo placed Niemöller under a protective detention (*Schutzhaft*) order and incarcerated him in [Sachsenhausen](#) concentration camp, again in solitary confinement.

Even while incarcerated, Niemöller remained a complex figure whose opposition to Nazism was juxtaposed with a strong nationalism. Whether because of emotional distress or a continued commitment to German nationalist and expansionist ideals, he attempted to reenlist in the Navy, appealing by letter from Sachsenhausen to Admiral Erich Raeder, commander-in-chief of the German Navy, in 1938 and again in 1941. In September 1939, he wrote to a former colleague in the military, asking that he be released from the concentration camp so that he could fight for Germany. In 1941, Gestapo officials transferred Niemöller to [Dachau](#), where he shared a barrack room with Catholic dissenters and was permitted access to books.

After more than seven years of incarceration, Niemöller was liberated by US troops in Tirol, Austria, after being transported by the SS from Dachau along with other political prisoners. In 1947, he was elected as president of the Hessen-Nassau Lutheran Church and began a world tour preaching collective guilt for Nazi persecution and crimes against humanity. His ideas are best reflected in the Stuttgart Confession of Guilt (*Stuttgarter Schuldbekentnis*), written mainly by Niemöller in October 1945 and issued in the name of the German Evangelical Church.

In the wake of Nazism, Niemöller's prominence as an opposition figure gave him international stature though he remained controversial. In Germany, he quickly became unpopular because of his call for acknowledgment of collective German guilt. He emphasized the particular guilt of the German churches for their support of Nazism. Niemöller's political discourse, however, continued to display some of the prejudices that led him to welcome the Nazi rise to power in 1933. He blamed the weakness of the parliamentary Weimar Republic for the rise of Hitler and failed to explicitly repudiate Hitler's political aims, condemning unequivocally only Nazi interference in religious matters.

Niemöller also attacked Allied authorities for their handling of denazification proceedings, issuing an ecclesiastical edict forbidding church members from sitting on denazification arbitration tribunals. He also advocated the speedy release of German prisoners of war. Niemöller's German nationalist sentiment never wavered as he railed against the division of Germany by the Allies, stating that he preferred unification even if it were under Communism. Nonetheless, Niemöller became a popular figure abroad. He delivered the opening address at the 1946 meeting of the Federal Council of Churches in the United States and traveled widely speaking about the German experience under Nazism.

By the mid-1950s, Niemöller had become a pacifist. He worked with a number of international groups, including the World Council of Churches, for international peace. Niemöller died on March 6, 1984 at the age of 92.

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007391>

# **Bystander**

## **First They Came**

by Martin Niemöller

First they came for the Socialists,

and I did not speak out--

Because I was not a Socialist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists,

and I did not speak out--

Because I was not a Trade Unionist.

Then they came for the Jews,

and I did not speak out--

Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me--

and there was no one left to speak for me.

## Irena Sendler

Sendler was born in 1910 in Otwock, a town some 15 miles southeast of Warsaw. She was greatly influenced by her father who was one of the first Polish Socialists. As a doctor his patients were mostly poor Jews.

In 1939, Germany invaded Poland, and the brutality of the Nazis accelerated with murder, violence and terror.

At the time, Irena was a Senior Administrator in the *Warsaw Social Welfare Department*, which operated the canteens in every district of the city. Previously, the canteens provided meals, financial aid, and other services for orphans, the elderly, the poor and the destitute. Now, through Irena, the canteens also provided clothing, medicine and money for the Jews. They were registered under fictitious Christian names, and to prevent inspections, the Jewish families were reported as being afflicted with such highly infectious diseases as typhus and tuberculosis.

But in 1942, the Nazis herded hundreds of thousands of Jews into a 16-block area that came to be known as the Warsaw Ghetto. The Ghetto was sealed and the Jewish families ended up behind its walls, only to await certain death.

Sendler was so appalled by the conditions that she joined *Zegota*, the Council for Aid to Jews, organized by the Polish underground resistance movement, as one of its first recruits and directed the efforts to rescue Jewish children.

To be able to enter the Ghetto legally, Irena managed to be issued a pass from Warsaw's *Epidemic Control Department* and she visited the Ghetto daily, reestablished contacts and brought food, medicines and clothing. But 5,000 people were dying a month from starvation and disease in the Ghetto, and she decided to help the Jewish children to get out.

For Sendler, a young mother herself, persuading parents to part with their children was in itself a horrendous task. Finding families willing to shelter the children, and thereby willing to risk their life if the Nazis ever found out, was also not easy.

Sendler, who wore a *star* armband as a sign of her solidarity to Jews, began smuggling children out in an ambulance. She recruited at least one person from each of the ten centers of the Social Welfare Department. With their help, she issued hundreds of false documents with forged signatures and successfully smuggled almost 2,500 Jewish children to safety and gave them temporary new identities.

Some children were taken out in gunnysacks or body bags. Some were buried inside loads of goods. A mechanic took a baby out in his toolbox. Some kids were carried out in potato sacks, others were placed in coffins, some entered a church in the Ghetto which had two entrances.

One entrance opened into the Ghetto, the other opened into the *Aryan* side of Warsaw. They entered the church as Jews and exited as Christians. "Can you guarantee they will live?" Irena later recalled the distraught parents asking. But she could only guarantee they would die if they stayed. "In my dreams," she said, "I still hear the cries when they left their parents."

Irena Sendler accomplished her incredible deeds with the active assistance of the church. "I sent most of the children to religious establishments," she recalled. "I knew I could count on the Sisters." Irena also had a remarkable record of cooperation when placing the youngsters: "No one ever refused to take a child from me," she said.

The children were given false identities and placed in homes, orphanages and convents. Sendler carefully noted, in coded form, the children's original names and their new identities. She kept the only record of their true identities in jars buried beneath an apple tree in a neighbor's back yard, across the street from German barracks, hoping she could someday dig up the jars, locate the children and inform them of their past. In all, the jars contained the names of 2,500 children.

But the Nazis became aware of Irena's activities, and on October 20, 1943 she was arrested, imprisoned and tortured by the Gestapo, who broke her feet and legs. She ended up in the *Pawiak Prison*, but no one could break her spirit. Though she was the only one who knew the names and addresses of the families sheltering the Jewish children, she withstood the torture, refusing to betray either her associates or any of the Jewish children in hiding.

Sentenced to death, Irena was saved at the last minute when *Zegota* members bribed one of the Germans to halt the execution. She escaped from prison but for the rest of the war she was pursued by the Gestapo.

After the war she dug up the jars and used the notes to track down the 2,500 children she placed with adoptive families and to reunite them with relatives scattered across Europe. But most lost their families during the Holocaust in Nazi death camps.

The children had known her only by her code name Jolanta. But years later, after she was honored for her wartime work, her picture appeared in a newspaper. "A man, a painter, telephoned me," said Sendler, "'I remember your face,' he said. 'It was you who took me out of the ghetto.' I had many calls like that!"

Irena Sendler did not think of herself as a hero. She claimed no credit for her actions. "I could have done more," she said. "This regret will follow me to my death."

Taken From: <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/irenasendler.html>

# Holocaust Project Memorial

You will make a memorial in order to commemorate a victim of the Holocaust. Remember, both those who survived and those who died are considered victims. You need to research a person who survived the Holocaust and make a collaged representation of that person's journey from **before** the Holocaust, **during** the Holocaust, and **after** the Holocaust (if applicable). You are encouraged to include photographs, maps, and other visual resources to the memorial. Your memorial must also include a poem, written by you, about the person's experiences.

## Steps to creating your Memorial:

- Choose and Research a Holocaust Victim
  - Go to [DestinyEnglish.Weebly.com](http://DestinyEnglish.Weebly.com)
  - Hover over "10<sup>th</sup> Grade English" and click on "Holocaust Literature"
  - Click on the button that says "Survivor and Victim Testimonies"
  - Look through the various quotations and click on one that sounds interesting. If the person sounds like one you are interested in making a memorial for, fill out the form on page \_\_\_\_.
- Complete the form on page \_\_\_\_ for your Holocaust victim
- Plan out your memorial
  - At least 4 pictures (they will be printed in BLACK AND WHITE at SCHOOL)
  - Consider color symbolism
  - Where are you going to put your poem?
  - Be creative!
- Purchase a piece of posterboard (available at the Dollar Tree for 50¢ or 69¢)
- Choose your pictures (they will be printed in BLACK AND WHITE at SCHOOL)
  - Choose at least 4 relevant and appropriate pictures to include in your memorial
  - Copy and paste your pictures onto a Word document
  - Email your Word document to Mrs. Seemayer to print for you  
[Lindsey.Seemayer@DestinySchool.com](mailto:Lindsey.Seemayer@DestinySchool.com)
- Complete the poetry brainstorm (guided by Mrs. Seemayer)
- Create a rough draft of the poem about your victim
- Edit and Revise your poem
- Create a final draft of your poem
  - At least 15 lines long
  - Email it to Mrs. Seemayer, so she can print it out  
[Lindsey.Seemayer@DestinySchool.com](mailto:Lindsey.Seemayer@DestinySchool.com)
- Assemble your memorial

## Victim Research

Name of Victim: \_\_\_\_\_ Age (range): \_\_\_\_\_

Reason this person was persecuted against: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Life before the Holocaust: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Experience during the Holocaust: \_\_\_\_\_

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Life after the Holocaust (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Poetry Spill Page



# Holocaust Timeline

**Directions:** Cut out the squares below and arrange the events according to the dates. Once the events are in chronological order, paste them onto the provided timeline. Then, choose what you think are the five most important events and write an explanation next to them about why it is significant.

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <p><b>December 8, 1941</b><br/>United States enters World War II</p>   | <p><b>January 30, 1933</b><br/>Adolf Hitler appointed chancellor of Germany</p>  | <p><b>May 8, 1945</b><br/>Germany surrenders; ending the Third Reich</p>  |
| <p><b>November 12, 1938</b><br/>Decree forcing all Jews to transfer retail businesses to Aryan hands</p>   | <p><b>September 17, 1939</b><br/>Jews in German-occupied Poland forced to wear distinguishing badge</p>  | <p><b>November 15, 1938</b><br/>Numerus Nullus decree expels all Jewish pupils from German schools</p>  |
| <p><b>April 19, 1943</b><br/>Warsaw Ghetto revolt begins as Germans attempt to liquidate 70,000 ghetto inhabitants; Jewish underground fights Nazis until early June</p> | <p><b>January 30, 1939</b><br/>Hitler threatens in Reichstag speech that, if war erupts, it will mean the Vernichtung (extermination) of European Jews</p>   | <p><b>November 9, 1938</b><br/>Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass) anti-Semitic riots and destruction of Jewish businesses, property and synagogues in Germany and Austria.</p> |
| <p><b>January 17, 1945</b><br/>Evacuation of Auschwitz; beginning of death march for 66,000 camp inmates</p>   | <p><b>September 1, 1941</b><br/>Jews in Third Reich obligated to wear yellow Star of David as distinguishing mark</p>  | <p><b>August 2, 1934</b><br/>Hitler named president and commander-in-chief of the armed forces following death of von Hindenburg</p>  |
| <p><b>April 26, 1938</b><br/>Jews in Reich must register all property with authorities</p>   | <p><b>November 15, 1940</b><br/>Warsaw Ghetto sealed off; approximately 500,000 inhabitants</p>  | <p><b>March 20, 1933</b><br/>First concentration camp - Dachau – established</p>  |
| <p><b>April 1, 1933</b><br/>Boycott of Jewish shops and businesses; Jewish professionals barred from entering their offices and places of employment</p>                 | <p><b>September 15, 1935</b><br/>“Nuremberg Laws,” anti-Jewish racial laws, enacted. Jews could no longer be German citizens, marry Aryans, fly the German flag or hire German maids under the age of 45</p> | <p><b>October 1941</b><br/>Establishment of Auschwitz-Birkenau camp; site of mass extermination of Jews, Gypsies, Poles, Russians and others</p>                                  |
| <p><b>June 6, 1944</b><br/>Allied invasion of Normandy (D-Day)</p>   | <p><b>November 22, 1945</b><br/>Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal commences.</p>   | <p><b>September 31, 1939</b><br/>Beginning of World War II; Germany invades Poland</p>  |